

March 17, 2023

The Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blv. #130, St Paul, MN 55155

Senate Majority Leader, Kari Dziedzic
95 University Avenue W. Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3113 St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate Minority Leader, Sen. Mark Johnson
95 University Avenue W. Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2401 St. Paul, MN 55155

Speaker of the House, Rep. Melissa Hortman
463 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155

House Minority Leader, Rep. Lisa Demuth
267 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Ron Latz
95 University Avenue W. Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3105 St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Warren Limmer
95 University Avenue W. Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2221 St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Kelly Moller
509 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Jaime Becker-Finn
559 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Paul Novotny
301 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155

CC: Attorney General Keith Ellison, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson, Department of Corrections Commissioner Paul Schnell

Dear Governor Tim Walz, Majority Leader Sen. Kari Dziedzic and Speaker of the House Rep. Melissa Hortman,

We write to you in the hope that you will join us in supporting a common slate of bills before the Minnesota legislature this session. We are a diverse group of individuals and organizations who all care about safety and justice that includes those with experience as victims, defendants, prosecutors and defense attorneys. We have varied histories of pressing for (or resisting) reform, and each of us has our own particular interests in the bills before the legislature.

Though we have these various areas of expertise, we agree on a central premise: that true justice and accountability are achieved when there is a balance between personal liberty, supportive programming, and public safety. We have observed that Minnesota (like other states in the U.S.) has in some ways lost this balance by restricting freedom in ways that do not enhance public safety. Too often, that imbalance not only fails to provide public safety but has driven racial disparities, alienating some communities from others.

We are all committed to the goal of protecting public safety while addressing and reforming aspects of the criminal legal system that do more harm than good. Minnesota has a long and proud history of intentional and prudent review of our government's restrictions on liberty, and we seek to work within that tradition.

The following policies reflect a wide range of issues that we believe will have a meaningful impact on people's lives and move the state of Minnesota in the right direction. All of us believe in some of these bills more than others, but are united in our support of them all. We want to acknowledge and express our appreciation to leadership for the passage of HF28/SF26 to restore voting rights to Minnesotans serving felony probation. We hope you will join us and sign on to the full Justice for All Legislative Agenda. Below you will find a list of the bills we support followed by a list of those people and organizations who have already signed on.

The Justice for All Agenda

1). Restore the Vote (Signed by Governor Tim Walz as of March 2023)

HF28 / SF26 (Frazier/Champion)

HF3 / SF3 (Greenman/Boldon)

Voting rights restored to Minnesotans serving community supervision for a felony conviction. Will impact over 30,000 Minnesotans and have general impact across the state and not just in the urban area.

Public Safety Innovation Package

HF25 / SF 524 (Frazier/Latz)

HF855 / SF 839 (Frazier/Oumou Verbeten)

Accounts and grants established for violent crime reduction strategies, law enforcement and community safety, and case clearance support.

Crime Victim Services Fund

HF 1437 /SF 1475 (Hollins /Gustafson)

Increasing funding and establishing grants for organizations that provide direct services to victims of crime.

364 Gross Misdemeanor

HF43 / SF 816 (Feist/Latz)

A bill setting the maximum term of incarceration for a gross misdemeanor at 364 days; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 609.03; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 609. This bill effectively disrupts certain deportation processes which rely on “year or more” sentences for immigrant defendants.

Juvenile Life without parole

HF1300 / SF1325 (Feist/Latz)

Abolishes juvenile life without parole; creates release eligibility after 15 years for all juvenile convictions; creates a juvenile review board; applies retroactively.

Prosecutor Initiated Resentencing

HF226 / SF586 (Moller/Latz)

Enables prosecutors to review past sentences and petition for resentencing hearings (to include petitions for release from prison) when continued incarceration is not in the interest of justice. Provision prohibits resentencing for upward departures.

Low Level Bail Reform

HF854 / SF 838 (Frazier/Oumou Verbeten)

Limits the use of cash bail for non-violent misdemeanors.

Juvenile Restorative Justice Funding

HF46 / SF55 (Feist/Champion)

Establishes the Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice with local steering committees created to provide local juvenile restorative justice programs.

Automatic Expungement

HF2023/SF2055 (Long / Champion)

Creates a budget to develop and implement a system of automatic expungement, with contingencies based on offense severity and following criminal records.

Clemency Reform
HF 2788 (Agbaje)

Merges pardon extraordinary into pardons, creates clemency commission to evaluate petitions and hold hearings, allows grants with less than unanimous vote on Pardon Board.

Aiding and Abetting
HF1406/SF1471 (Fraizer/Oumou Verbeten)

Reclassifies aiding and abetting crimes related to murder offenses, refocusing charging for underlying felony law violation rather than aiding and abetting, effectively reducing penalties for murders committed by others. Reduces penalties for juveniles and young adult offenders, those whose offense lack premeditation, and those where gang-related coercion is a factor.

No-Knock Warrant Ban
HF2290/SF2259 (Curran/Oumou Verbeten)

Prohibits use of no-knock warrants.

Retroactive Probation 5 Year Cap
HF 1607/SF1950 (Long/Oumou Verbeten)

Reduces maximum probation sentences to five years.

Sentencing Guideline Commission Restructure
No Bill Number or Author

Provides for additional appointments to the Minnesota's sentencing guidelines commission.

Ban on Pretextual Stops
HF1832/ SF2232 (Frazier/Mohamed)

Prohibits police officers from making certain traffic stops.
The Members of the Justice for All Coalition

Organizations:

Urban League Twin Cities
African American Leadership Forum (AALF)
Center for the Study of Black Life and the Law
(at MH)
Minnesota Asset Building Coalition
Minnesota Freedom Fund
Until We Are All Free
Council For Minnesotans of African Heritage
(CMAH)
MNCASA
Veterans Defense Project
Second Chance Coalition
Until We Are All Free
Violence Free Minnesota
Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers
(MABL)

Individuals:

Carlos Mariani (Advisor)
Mark Osler (Co-Chair)
Perry Moriearty (Co-Chair)
Raj Sethuraju
Linus Chan
Richard S. Frase

Contact:

Justin Terrell
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The Minnesota Justice Research Center
(MNJRC)

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**NOTE: The MNJRC has conducted background research or advised on all of the above policies and is the convener of this coalition.